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EXCISE

FROM : Amembassy HELSINKI

DATE: October 24, 1962

SUBJECT: Article on Finnish Policy in Turkish Paper Arouses Leftist Indignation

REF :

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A recent article in the Turkish newspaper MILLYET devoted to Finland's foreign and domestic policies, the third in the series on Finland, has stimulated an indignant reaction from the left-wing and Agrarian press of Finland. Written by Turkish newspaperman Orhan KARAVELI, who visited Finland during the Communist-sponsored VIII World Youth Festival, the article series had been described by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in its review of foreign press (No. 190/October 4, 1962) as favorable and intending to give a good picture of the Finnish "relative nation". The article offensive to the Communist and Skogist press was published in the form of an interview with "an editor of a very significant Helsinki newspaper".

According to the Foreign Ministry's press review the Finnish editor desired to stress in the interview that Finland's neutrality is not primarily due to an ideological attitude but rather the 1,269 kilometer-long border with the Soviet Union. In the interview, as reported in the Turkish paper, the editor first reviewed the 1948 Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance and then responded to the question: "Why does Finland not conclude a corresponding treaty with the Western countries?" His reported answer was: "All bills have to be paid at a certain time. As soon as we have done so, we are free. You yourself have had an opportunity in Helsinki during the Festival to see what these bills can be."

The Turkish reporter then asked the editor whether Finland could not take a decisive step toward the West in order to bring the Soviet pressure to an end, and inquired what would happen if this were done. The answer of the Finnish editor was:

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From Embassy HELSINKI

"Like many other Finns, I have often put the same question to myself. For example, I have frequently asked myself to what degree our neutrality will protect us in case of a war. Why have we not, following the example of Norway and Denmark, entered a defense treaty, thus providing for ourselves guarantees of security. But a radical step like that cannot be made without a detailed plan. In order to do it one has to act skillfully and select the right moment for such a step."

As an example, the Finnish editor reviewed the situation in the autumn of 1958, when the Soviet Union had "canceled all orders of icebreakers in order to punish Finland", and continued:

"If vessels of this type had been ordered from us by America and Canada at that moment, the situation would have changed and the result might have been even a break-off of relations with Russia. Things would have run well. But the Western powers failed to make use of this historic chance. They have even in some sense urged us to remain tied to the Soviet Union."

The Turkish article went on to describe President KEKKONEN as a skilled balancer of Finland's neutrality. It also noted that "young" Ahti KARJALAINEN, the Prime Minister, enjoys the President's full confidence.

Bristling at the views expressed by the unidentified Finnish editor, left-wing Social Democratic opposition daily, PÄIVÄN SANOMAT, said the Finn in question is one who strongly dislikes the Paasikivi Line in foreign policy. He would like to see Finland a NATO member and strive for this goal at the risk of a break-off of the relations with the Soviet Union, as in fall 1958.

"It is repugnant to see that there are still many among us who think as this editor does.... Citizens who oppose the post-war improvement in the relations between Finland and the Soviet Union are the first to be blamed for the feelings which last summer contaminated certain young persons who took part in the anti-Festival riots. An essential reason why anti-Soviet feelings now and then arise in our country is the habit of certain Finnish newspapers to publish, without criticism, the Western propaganda poured out steadily by the great news agencies. We can note with satisfaction that the main organ of our own party, PÄIVÄN SANOMAT, has unreservedly followed the Paasikivi Line. It is deplorable that a part of our press badly presents this Finnish line. This shows that the Social Democratic Opposition (i.e., Skogists) still has a role in the guidance of Finland's foreign-political views along the lines of peaceful coexistence. Our party can always say with a good reason that it has, under all circumstances, been in favor of the development of good relations between Finland and the Soviet Union. The relations between Finland and the Soviet Union have been the primary question of our nation's fate."

The article then quoted President Kekkonen's words in Moscow in November 1960, to wit: "...in the question of war and peace we are not neutral. We support the policy of peace against the policy of war."

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In a sub-editorial on the same day Communist KANSAN UUTISET also commented on the interview reported in the Turkish press, noting that it gives a clear picture of the attitudes and aims of the "reactionary circles".

"Everything indicates that the foreign-political idiocy that was deep-frozen in 1944 has been melting for years and that this melting process is at present progressing rapidly both in public and in private. The foreign-political crisis brought on by Fagerholm's Cabinet in 1958, as well as the Honka operation, were detailed but unsuccessful calculations to cause the deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union to the break-off point, in order to make possible the entry of the country into NATO. Besides affecting opinion, the systematic obstruction of economic intercourse between Finland and the Soviet Union, which recently has been clearly demonstrated in connection with the Saimaa Canal Agreement, has been used as a weapon".

KANSAN UUTISET then urged all citizens to unite their forces to "maintain Finland's post-war foreign policy and to secure its neutral position and its foreign-political treaties", concluding that "words are not enough, deeds are needed".

Agrarian MAAKANSA, in an article by Pertteli (Miss Heini MANKKI), sharply criticized the views expressed to the Turkish newspaper by the Finnish editor. In words similar to those in KANSAN UUTISET and PÄIVÄN SANOMAT, the paper castigated those who express foreign policy views contrary to the official policy, i.e., the Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line, which the paper asserted is supported by the Finnish people. The article concluded with a demand that the Foreign Ministry expose the identity of the offending Finnish editor.

Swedish-language HUFVUDSTADSBLADET, the only other paper commenting on the matter, noted that the Communist commentary used all the distortions and tricks one expects from such an organ. The paper expressed dismay, however, that the Agrarian press so readily accepts the allegations of the Communist newspaper, and worse, accepts the content of the original interview in the Turkish paper without question. The paper concluded that the Agrarian press, as has happened before, picks on every straw to belabor opponents of the party's policies, and is not beyond distortion and groundless accusations in its eagerness to instruct the Finns in the virtues of Agrarian leadership.

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From Embassy HELSINKI

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For the Ambassador:

Harvey F. Nelson Jr.

Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.
Second Secretary of Embassy

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